



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Gregory G. Lockhart
Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ohs>

CONTACT: Fred Alverson
614-469-5715

OPERATOR OF LOCAL CLEANING BUSINESS PLEADS GUILTY TO INCOME TAX EVASION AND MARRIAGE FRAUD CHARGES

Associate also Pleads Guilty to Marriage Fraud Charges

CINCINNATI -- Vitali Popkov, age 31, of Morrow pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of committing income tax evasion and one count of aiding and abetting marriage fraud. An associate of Popkov's, Ausra Orinaite, age 29, also of Morrow, pleaded guilty to one count of committing marriage fraud. Popkov is a Georgian national and Orinaite is a Lithuanian national. Neither are U.S. citizens.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Jose A. Gonzalez, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office; Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and James Vanderberg, Special Agent in Charge, Office of Labor, Racketeering, and Fraud Investigation, U.S. Department of Labor, announced the pleas entered before Senior United States District Judge S. Arthur Spiegel.

Popkov admitted that he operated Mirage Cleaning Services, Inc., formerly US Cleaning, Inc., of Cincinnati from September 2003 through December 2007. His company contracted with area businesses and hotels to provide cleaning services. From January 2004 through December 2007, Popkov paid wages totaling \$2,768,859 to his employees, but knowingly failed to withhold federal income taxes on wages paid, and failed to pay the company's share of the taxes. As a result, Popkov evaded \$423,635 in federal employment taxes.

He faces a punishment of up to five years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$100,000 and payment of taxes, interest and penalties on the amount of unpaid taxes.

In an effort to stay in the United States, Orinaite, arranged a sham marriage with a U.S. citizen living in Louisville, Kentucky on or about July 15, 2005. Orinaite admitted that she and the man have never lived together or otherwise acted as husband and wife.

Popkov helped her arrange the fraudulent marriage, including photographing them as a couple as part of an album presented to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement as evidence as to the validity of the marriage.

They each face a sentence of up to five years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000 for marriage fraud, as well as deportation. Judge Spiegel will set a date for sentencing.

ICE agents arrested them on July 10. They have been in custody since their arrests.

Lockhart commended the cooperative investigation by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as Deputy Criminal Chief Anthony Springer, who is prosecuting the case.

###